

No. XIV.—DR. CALMETTE'S ANTITOXIC SERUM AND THE
POISON OF THE DABOIA (*VIPERA RUSSELLI*).

In the exceedingly interesting and informing article on "Snake Bites and Poisonous Fishes" which appeared in the last number of the Journal (No. 1 of Vol. XV), there appears a statement which, in the light of recent experiments carried out in India by an expert on snake poisons, should I think, in the general interests of a very important subject, be noticed—specially for the sake of those who may carry about Calmette's serum with a feeling that it is absolutely reliable. In the above articles it is stated that Calmette's antitoxic serum will "immunise animals and man from lethal doses of *any* venom, although each snake venom has *per se* well marked tonic peculiarities producing several and various local phenomena." But, so far as I have been reliably informed, it has been ascertained that although Dr. Calmette's serum is undoubtedly efficient in counteracting the venom of cobras, it is *not* so in the case of the poison of the Russell's Viper or Daboia.

G. S. RODON, MAJOR.

DHARWAR, 23rd July, 1903.

No. XV.—FEROCITY OF THE HAMADRYAD OR KING-COBRA
(*NAIA BUNGARUS*).

I am sending you a snake for identification which bit a coolie woman whilst she was plucking leaf on our tea estate. The woman died about twenty minutes after being bitten. It appears the snake instituted an unprovoked attack on the woman, seizing her by the leg and hanging on but not attempting to wind round her body. The woman was absolutely paralyzed with fear, and apparently did nothing to try and free herself. The other coolie women who were plucking the same plot of tea at once went off to get help, but it was not until some coolie men arrived on the scene that the snake released its hold and made off. The men gave chase and managed to kill it, and they assert that when pressed the snake attacked them.

I should feel much obliged if you would kindly enlighten me on the following points:—(1) What kind of snake it is? (2) Whether it is usual for this kind of snake to attack people, and why it hung on so long to the woman's leg? It had hold of her for quite eight minutes and could have easily let go had it so wished, because it did so immediately the men approached to kill it. (3) Whether the snake is venomous, or if the woman simply died of fright? I am not inclined to believe the latter myself, because she was a strong healthy woman, and seemed quite re-assured when I told her that the snake was not venomous.

The symptoms were: much pain and swelling of part bitten, vomiting, difficulty in breathing, total prostration, and then death.